

The Uranium Resources of the U.S.S.R.

The Soviet Union has a variety of sources from which uranium can be obtained. The most widely known source is from the Erz Mountains located on the border between Saxony, Germany and Bohemia, Czechoslovakia. This is one of the oldest mining regions of the world and has produced silver, cobalt, bismuth, tungsten, etc., throughout the years. Uranium was also produced here in the early part of the twentieth century for the production of radium. Since the end of the war the Soviets have taken over this area and are exploiting it for all possible uranium ores. Production of uranium from this area is now many times the pre-war production.

Another source of uranium outside the U.S.S.R., which is being exploited by the Soviets, is located in Bulgaria. This is a fairly low-grade deposit and production is probably small.

Within the U.S.S.R. there are other possible sources of uranium. The most famous deposit is located in the Fergana Valley of Eastern Uzbek SSR at a place called Tyuya Muzun. The uranium mineral produced there is called tyuyamunite after the place of origin. It is found in metamorphosed limestones as coatings on the sides of fissures and caves. The Soviets have mined uranium here for the production of radium for a number of years and much of the ore body has probably been exhausted.

Other deposits are also found in the Fergana Valley. Pitchblende is found at Taboshar not far from Tashkent in a polymetallic sulfide vein deposit. Carnotite deposits are located in the northern and central part of the Fergana district.

Other areas offering possibilities of uranium ores are the foothills of Altai mountains and numerous pegmatite deposits in the Transbaikalia area, in the Ural Mountains, in the Kola and Karelia peninsulas and in the Pamir mountains. This type of deposits is only a very low-grade source and can produce only small amounts of uranium with the expenditure of considerable cost and effort.

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